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# RURAL FIRE DEFENSE...



## YOU CAN SURVIVE

## FOREWORD

The President has assigned highly important defense responsibilities to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These delegations—covering food, rural fire defense, information for farmers, and related responsibilities—are the Department's part of the total defense plans of this Nation against nuclear attack. Our objective is to help the United States survive and recover.



Protection and survival of those living in rural areas, along with crops, livestock, and other agricultural resources, is vital. In addition, some rural families may be faced with heavy responsibilities for sheltering and feeding survivors, bringing fires under control, and helping to rehabilitate nearby areas.

I consider it a duty of every USDA employee to familiarize himself with our total civil defense effort throughout rural America, and to give it his full support. In USDA our defense responsibilities are a definite part of all current programs, with equal priority with the programs themselves.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Orville L. Freeman".

SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE



If our Nation should suffer a large-scale nuclear attack, the measure of our ability to survive and recover will be the courage with which we appraise the dangers, and the vigor with which we act now to prepare for them.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert S. McNamara".

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

# RURAL FIRE DEFENSE

## YOU CAN SURVIVE

### Preparation for Survival

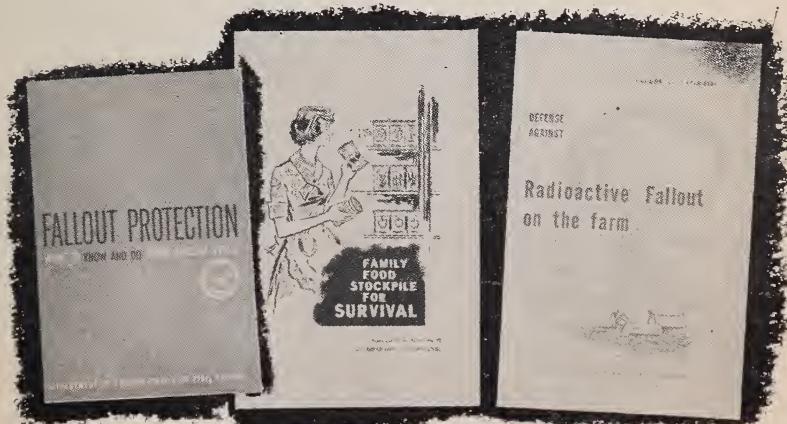
There is no easy answer to achieving protection from a nuclear attack. An accident or an enemy's aggressive move can bring down on us a devastation too gruesome to describe. No one is immune from this danger that nuclear weapon technology and strained international relations have made part of our daily living. No one. Not even the farmer, the logger, or other rural dwellers.

Nuclear bombs may strike anywhere—in cities, forests, or military installations, industries, and resource targets located in agricultural areas. Not only nuclear bombs but clusters of incendiary bombs too. We cannot run away from them. We can only prepare for the event, hoping that such preparation and our country's military strength will discourage the

enemy from employing these forces of annihilation.

Preparation is the keyword to the National Civil Defense program. It includes constructing, equipping, and provisioning family and public shelters to provide protection against fallout; a warning system to give our people some time to seek shelter if an attack comes; and a system that trains and equips people to carry on the many tasks that would be necessary after an attack.

Preparation may mean survival—your survival, your family's survival, your Nation's survival. Simple precautions and protective measures could make all the difference between life and death. They could make all the difference between complete destruction of your



possessions or a sizable remainder after the effects of the bombs have passed.

To be prepared is to be better armed psychologically for anything

that may happen. And this kind of armor in the minds of people is as important to the national welfare as are the weapons in the hands of soldiers.

## First Things First

Saving lives and fighting fire will command top priority as immediate postattack actions, should a nuclear war be launched. Fire in our land from any sort of bomb works for the enemy, not for us. It kills our men and animals. It destroys the life-sustaining produce of our farms and the resources of our woodlands. It disrupts transportation and knocks communication, power, and water transmission facilities out of commission. The searing damage caused to every segment of the Nation's economy

weakens our power to resist the enemy.

To suppress the flames set by the bombs and to limit their spread will be a prime task of all able citizens. For this menace must first be brought under control before we can "pick up the pieces" and start over again. And in our rural homes and lands, the number and condition of pieces we pick up will depend on the care we had taken before the attack to keep fire from starting or getting out of control.

## Organizing for Defense

Fighting fire requires organization at a national level, a State level, a local and a family level. Under the Department of Defense's overall leadership in national preparedness, a civilian rural fire defense has been set up to cope with emergencies in the countryside. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Forest Service, is responsible for directing and coordinating this defense at the national level. Its program for national fire protection on wild and rural lands provides national leadership to the fire effort and gives technical guidance to the States. About 92 percent of the country's land area is covered in this responsibility. The Forest Service counts heavily on the cooperation of State, private, and Federal agencies with firefighting resources for the success of its assignment.

At the State and local level, the Governor is responsible for rural



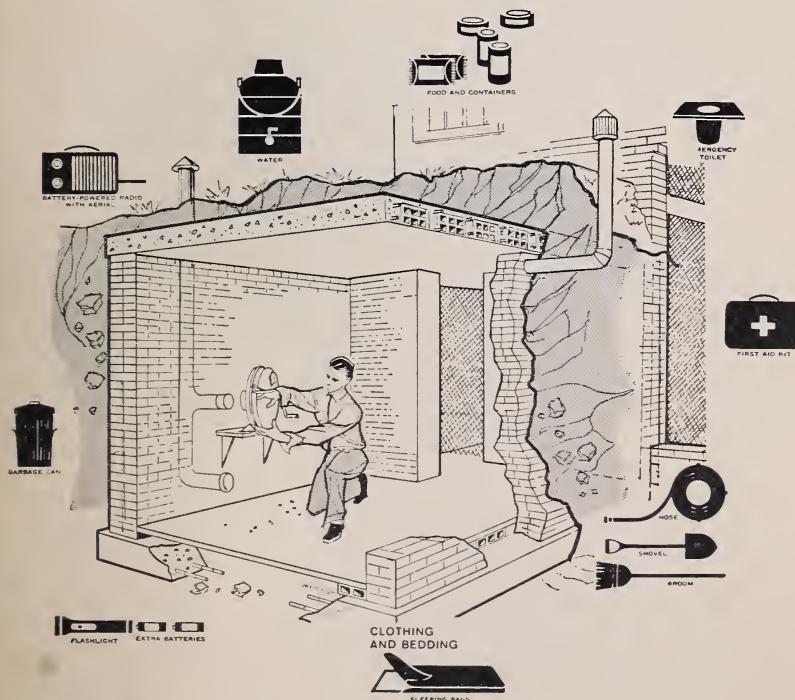
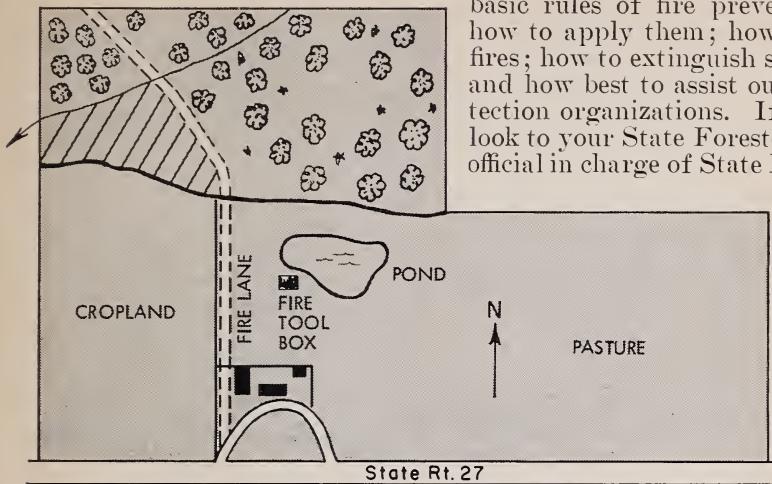
fire defense. Through his State organization, which includes the Director of Civil Defense and State Rural Fire Defense, he assists local fire protection agencies in planning, organizing, equipping, and coordinating rural fire defense activities. He also sees to it that men and equipment, if needed, are made available to other States if they can be spared.

## Preparing for the Worst

National and State organizations set up for rural fire defense can function more effectively in an emergency if individuals have prepared themselves beforehand. Such

preparations serve a dual purpose. A fire lane around a family forest or grain field, for example, is a property protector in peace or war.

There are certain things each rural resident should know—the basic rules of fire prevention and how to apply them; how to report fires; how to extinguish small fires; and how best to assist our fire protection organizations. If in doubt, look to your State Forester or other official in charge of State Rural Fire



Defense or to local fire service personnel for information, training, and guidance.

*Other essential preparations include:*

- A shelter against radioactive fallout and contamination. All families should have access to this protection. Stock the shelter with enough food and water to last a few weeks; first aid supplies; emergency sanitary facilities, bedding, and other items to maintain health and morale. Make sure it is ventilated. Keep a battery radio there, ready to tune in on radio stations issuing warning and directions. Instruments to measure radiation are desirable; your local Civil Defense coordinator can tell you where to purchase them.

- Cleaning up in and around the home. This involves removing fire hazards from attics, closets, storage rooms, basement, and garage. The area around the house, fuel tanks, and outbuildings should be kept free of grass, weeds, and debris. Herbicides may be used around key installations to kill vegetation.

- Firefighting tools and equipment such as shovel, rake, water

bucket, and ax kept at strategic locations and in good condition.

- An adequate, easily accessible, "on-farm" water supply such as irrigation ditch, water tanks, cisterns, or a pond. For farms with a water pressure system it would be good protection to have 50 or more feet of garden hose to use in case of fire. Lightweight portable pumps and hose should be considered as special equipment for local teams.

- An all-weather farm lane kept clear so that fire equipment and other vehicles can move freely and easily.

- Good communications system for prompt reporting of fires. The sooner a fire is hit with all available means, the sooner it can be suppressed.

- Preparation and maintenance of firebreaks or plowed firelines through the farm and woodlands, to stop the spread of fire.

- Available bulldozers, tractors, and cultivators for construction of firelines.

- Organization of each family and neighborhood into a firefighting team, each member with specific duties and developed "know-how" for emergencies.

### **The Bomb and Its Damage**

When a nuclear bomb is dropped on a target, the detonation creates a fireball. This fireball sends out radiation in two pulses. The second pulse is the more destructive one. It carries nearly all the heat of the explosion, travels as fast as light, and depending upon the yield of the weapon, lasts from a few seconds to about 1 minute. During that time, the heat intensity of the pulse will cause numerous fires along its path extending from ground zero, the point of burst, to a distance as great as 40 miles. The distance covered depends on the size of the bomb, the atmospheric conditions, and whether the bomb ex-

ploded on the ground or in the air. A blast wave of air pressure follows the heat flash.

At the limit of thermal damage, such materials as leaves, dry brush, grass, unsound wood, upholstery, curtains, paper, and rubbish would ignite. Other fires will have started from other causes such as overturned space heaters, broken gaslines, and short circuits. Isolated fires that spring up a considerable distance from ground zero may die down as the blast wave passes over them. If not, they may spread if there are quantities of burnable material nearby.

## The Local Effort

After a nuclear explosion, the first 48 hours carry the greatest radiation danger. During that time, the survivors within the zone covered by the explosion will be waiting in their shelters for instructions by radio as to the best protective measures. Fires will be doing their damage to structures and to the land. People within this area may have to risk radiation exposure to escape areas of intense fires.

Around the edges of this zone, individuals must be on the alert against fire spread. Where individual effort is not enough in suppressing fire, the local fire services may be called upon wherever available. Wardens, rangers, and other leaders, using their experience and know-how, will direct the crews. Local organized volunteers may contribute help and equipment.

Through mutual assistance agreements among counties and States, manpower and equipment may be moved in from undamaged areas to help combat the aftermath of the bomb.

Organized fire protection is vital to rural areas in peace or war. Residents in areas without this protection should consult the State Forester or Fire Marshal about setting up a rural fire defense. Farmers, woodlot owners, and other rural dwellers need this protection. Much progress has been made in the big job of welding rural fire forces into a total defense effort. However, still more remains to be done in meshing all segments of rural fire defense into an organization of maximum readiness.

## Research

Much remains to be learned about nuclear defense. Research carried on by the Forest Service for the Department of Defense provided knowledge about the ignition of

natural fuels caused by a nuclear explosion. This knowledge is part of today's national planning for protection against rural fires. More is on the way.

## Everyone's Responsibility

If an attack comes, we are all in the same boat. People and resources—two of our important retaliatory and rebuilding assets—are at stake. The loss of someone else's house or woodlot or community or life is our loss. It is for rural people to organize, to train,

and be ready for any fire emergency. They should also be prepared to help others and maintain law and order in stricken places. Preparation, teamwork, and concern for our Nation and fellow men is a combination that will take the edge off disaster.



# Help Protect America



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